

THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously presented) A method comprising:

registering a plurality of information suppliers and a plurality of areas of interest associated with the plurality of respective information suppliers;

finding one of the plurality of areas of interest associated with one of the plurality of information suppliers that matches a field of interest requested by a client;

requesting a plurality of records from the one of the plurality of information suppliers;

creating a model norm based on a data dictionary, wherein a format of the data dictionary is standardized by an agreement among the plurality of information suppliers;

selecting a subset of a plurality of characteristics from the plurality of records based on the model norm;

preparing a report with the subset;

ordering the subset of the plurality of characteristics in the report based on a relative significance of the characteristics in the model norm, wherein the relative significance specifies a different order of the characteristics than the plurality of records;

ordering the plurality of records in the report based on a sort rule in the model norm;

receiving a favored norm from the one of the plurality of information suppliers of a selected record in the report;

selecting a second subset of the plurality of characteristics from the plurality of records, wherein the favored norm specifies the second subset; and

creating a second report with the second subset.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Canceled)

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the preparing the report further comprises:

preparing extra characteristics not in the subset in a least-significant column of the report as a sequence of name-value pairs.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the preparing extra characteristics further comprises:

ordering the name-value pairs based on a relative significance in a favored norm.

6. (Previously presented) A storage medium comprising:

means for registering a plurality of information suppliers and a plurality of areas of interest associated with the plurality of respective information suppliers;

means for finding one of the plurality of areas of interest associated with one of the plurality of information suppliers that matches a field of interest requested by a client;

means for requesting a plurality of records from the one of the plurality of information suppliers;

means for creating a model norm based on a data dictionary, wherein a format of the data dictionary is standardized by an agreement among the plurality of information suppliers;

means for selecting a subset of a plurality of characteristics from the plurality of records based on the model norm;

means for preparing a report with the subset;

means for ordering the subset of the plurality of characteristics in the report based on a relative significance of the characteristics in the model norm, wherein the relative significance specifies a different order of the characteristics than the plurality of records;

means for receiving a favored norm from the one of the plurality of information suppliers of a selected record in the report;

means for selecting a second subset of the plurality of characteristics from the plurality of records, wherein the favored norm specifies the second subset; and

means for creating a second report with the second subset.

7. (Previously presented) The storage medium of claim 6, wherein the means for preparing further comprises:

means for preparing extra characteristics not in the subset in a least-significant column of the report as a sequence of name-value pairs.

8. (Previously presented) The storage medium of claim 6, wherein the means for preparing further comprises:

means for preparing extra characteristics not in the subset in a series of columns ordered based on a relative significance in a favored norm.

9. (Previously presented) The storage medium of claim 6, wherein the means for preparing further comprises:

means for preparing an indicator of whether extra characteristics not in the subset are available.

10. (Previously presented) The storage medium of claim 6, further comprising:

means for ordering the plurality of records in the report based on a sort rule in the model norm.

11. (Previously presented) A storage medium encoded with instructions, wherein the instructions when executed comprise:

registering a plurality of information suppliers and a plurality of areas of interest associated with the plurality of respective information suppliers;

finding one of the plurality of areas of interest associated with one of the plurality of information suppliers that matches a field of interest requested by a client;

requesting a plurality of records from the one of the plurality of information suppliers;

creating a model norm based on a data dictionary, wherein a format of the data dictionary is standardized by an agreement among the plurality of information suppliers;

selecting a subset of a plurality of characteristics from a plurality of records received from the one of a plurality of information suppliers, wherein the selecting of the subset is based on the model norm;

preparing a first report with the subset, wherein the preparing further comprises ordering the plurality of records in the first report based on a sort rule in the model norm;

ordering the subset of the plurality of characteristics in the first report based on a relative significance of the characteristics in the model norm, wherein the relative significance specifies a different order of the characteristics than the records;

receiving a favored norm from the one of the plurality of information suppliers;

selecting a second subset of the plurality of characteristics from the plurality of records, wherein the favored norm specifies the second subset; and

creating a second report with the second subset.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Canceled)

14. (Previously presented) The storage medium of claim 11, wherein the creating further comprises:

ordering the subset of the plurality of characteristics in the second report based on a relative significance in the favored norm.

15. (Previously presented) The storage medium of claim 11, wherein the creating further comprises:

ordering the plurality of records in the second report based on a sort rule in the favored norm.

16. (Previously presented) An electronic device comprising:

a processor; and

a storage device encoded with instructions, wherein the instructions when executed on the processor comprise:

- registering a plurality of information suppliers and a plurality of areas of interest associated with the plurality of respective information suppliers;

- finding the plurality of areas of interest associated with the plurality of information suppliers that match a field of interest requested by a client;

- requesting a plurality of records from the plurality of information suppliers;

- creating a model norm based on a data dictionary, wherein a format of the data dictionary is standardized by an agreement among the plurality of information suppliers,

- selecting a first subset of a plurality of characteristics from the plurality of records received from the plurality of information suppliers, wherein the selecting the first subset is based on the model norm,

- preparing a first report with the first subset,

- ordering the first subset of the plurality of characteristics in the first report based on a relative significance of the characteristics in the model norm, wherein the relative significance specifies a different order of the characteristics than the records,

- ordering the plurality of records in the first report based on a sort rule in the model norm,

- receiving a favored norm from one of the plurality of information suppliers, wherein the one of the plurality of information suppliers is associated with a selected record in the first report,

- selecting a second subset of the plurality of characteristics from the plurality of records, wherein the favored norm specifies the second subset, and

- creating a second report with the second subset.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Previously presented) The electronic device of claim 16, wherein the creating further comprises:

ordering the second subset in the second report based on a relative significance in the favored norm.

19. (Previously presented) The electronic device of claim 16, wherein the creating further comprises:

ordering the plurality of records in the second report based on a sort rule in the favored norm.

20. (Original) The electronic device of claim 16, wherein the instructions further comprise:

propagating the plurality of records with a default value specified in the model norm if the plurality of records lack a value.